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Oak Hill News

No. 09

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Volume 72

With Jesus as our guide and community as our goal, we worship, love, serve and grow.

A Message from Pastor Alan

Dear Oak Hill Friends,

If you are reading this, thank you!

I start out that way because an old and very good friend of Oak Hill posted on Facebook today that she is not sure she has *ever* read the pastor's message in *any* church newsletter. Our former pastor, Erin Counihan, replied in (what I am sure was) mock indignation, asking how many years this poster has gotten the *Oak Hill News*. The poster answered that she always read the "other parts," the "committee reports and stuff in the calendar." And she always found the squirrel. But, she implied, she didn't read the pastor's newsletter message.

The "other parts," the committee reports and the calendar and all the rest of this newsletter, are valuable information. They are no doubt the reason there is an *Oak Hill News* in the first place. Church members and others need to be informed about what's going on in our congregation. But, why a monthly article from the pastor (or pastor surrogate like me)? Over all the years of my ministry I have always had the sense that I am called to *tell* something. Exactly what this something is cannot be stated in just a few words. But my job as a minister of the Word is to express my understanding of the Gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, as clearly and completely as I can. This expressing the good news is to be done by every Christian in every possible way, in deeds as well as in words, in what we do as well as in what we say. But for me, and for all ministers of the Word, the *saying* part seems to be primary.

Of course, the minister's main way of saying what is to be said is the sermon. But there are other ways,

too. One way is this monthly message in the newsletter. It allows the minister to address particular topics, specific issues that may not be addressed elsewhere, and to address them in writing, so that readers have a chance to read the message over and to think more about what is being said.

Again: the pastor's job, in sermons or the newsletter or anywhere, is to *say* something, and the congregation's job is to take in what is said, consider it, and (we hope) do something about it. We have a new transitional pastor coming to Oak Hill September 1. When she arrives, let us be prepared to listen to what she has to tell us, and to respond accordingly. I once heard a charge to the congregation at a new pastor's installation that was based on Acts 10, verse 33: "So now all of us are here in the presence of God to listen to all that the Lord has commanded you to say." Yes! That should be the attitude with which we greet Pastor Wanda.

Thanks, friends, for all the opportunities you have given me over the past nine months to speak and to listen, and to be a partner with you in guiding our church through this time of pastoral transition.

Your Oak Hill amigo,
Alan Meyers

Rev. Wanda Lawry

Dear Friends,

I am very excited to be serving the Oak Hill Presbyterian Church. I wanted to share a little bit about my background and my faith journey as we begin an exciting new adventure.

“Not all who wander are lost” (J.R.R. Tolkien). The name Wanda means wanderer. In me, it rings true. I have always enjoyed walking, traveling, finding new adventures around every corner. I guess that is why I like to talk about my faith as a spiritual journey.



Pastor Wanda and Jazzy

I grew up in a Christian family in Des Moines, Iowa, who was very involved in the life of the church. We were at church every Sunday morning for Sunday school and church, as well as the mid-week service, supper, and activities. I have always been very outgoing, energetic, and curious.

When I was in high school, I had many opportunities to deepen my faith. I was involved in a two-year leadership development program with youth from many churches across the region. I had the opportunity to go on several summer mission trips which involved working with long-term partnerships for 12 weeks in several different countries, including Venezuela,



Scotland, and Japan. I developed a heart for mission, and social justice. These opportunities helped me to recognize a call to ministry. My call was recognized,

affirmed, and nurtured by the leadership of my church.

Throughout my college experience, my call to the ministry continued to be affirmed and I knew I would pursue a seminary education. Following college, I was invited to work at my home church for three years as a minister of youth, missions, and Christian Education! In addition to receiving a wealth of experience, I had some wonderful mentors who taught me how to do ministry in the trenches before I attended seminary in Chicago.

One of my favorite passages of scripture has always been Isaiah 40:31 which proclaims: “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not grow weary—they shall walk and not faint.”



Pastor Wanda and Matthew

There are times in our lives when we experience mountain top experiences, times when we feel God’s presence with us in unmistakable ways – time when we feel as if we can soar with the eagles. I remember times like these in my ordination into the ministry, the birth of my amazing son Matthew, and the ups and downs of parenting, the privilege of walking with people in times of great joy and times of great sorrow and knowing that my presence made a difference in their lives. The opportunity to travel to other countries as a part of an interfaith team to study and learn from one another. But that is not the only way that God gives strength. There are times when we feel like we have the energy to accomplish great things, times when we will run and not grow weary. I have helped people to discover their gifts for ministry and empowered them to move beyond their comfort zones to put their faith into action in both small and large ways. I have challenged the status quo and helped people to reach out to people who were experiencing

Rev. Wanda Lawry (cont'd)

displacement, working with refugee families from Central America, Afghanistan, and Ukraine. I have helped to change church structures that no longer fit the needs of the congregation and guided them to new ways of working together in smaller teams. I have worked tirelessly to build relationships and partnerships with neighbors and communities in interfaith circles and in businesses. I have experienced the excitement of ministry without growing weary. God gives us strength in many ways. And yet there are times in our lives when God promises to help us to walk and not to faint. I have had to learn how to practice self-care after years of moving full steam ahead. I have walked with families coming to grips with loved ones experiencing cancer and other illnesses, mental health issues, addictions, and many other challenges. Those are the times when God's promise to walk and not faint means the most.

All of these experiences have been a part of my spiritual journey. As a lifelong learner, I am aware that I am continuing to learn and stretch and grow. I have not lost my "wander lust." I still enjoy finding new adventures around every corner. I have learned that sometimes the greatest spiritual experiences happen at the most unusual times, often what seems to be an "interruption," is indeed an opportunity. I have learned to look for sacred time and sacred spaces everywhere, in a conversation with a friend, in a walk around the block, in the beauty of a sunset, in the art gallery. All of life is sacred, for in life and death we belong to God!

After nearly 25 years of pastoring churches in Long Island, New York, I am excited to return to the mid-west. I am honored to be serving in partnership with the session and everyone who is a part of the Oak Hill Congregation. I look forward to getting better acquainted with each of you. I hope to have the opportunity to learn more about the story of your lives as individuals and as a community of faith. Please do not hesitate to give me a call or reach out to me so that we can schedule a time to meet together for coffee, lunch, or a walk in the neighborhood. I

Blessings & Peace
Pastor Wanda

**WORSHIP AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
COMMITTEE**

By Matt Hanify

Worship

Congratulations. You have found yourself at Oak Hill Presbyterian Church, the finest church located at this particular corner. We are very glad to see you. In case nobody at the front door welcomed you – welcome! Come on in. We are very happy to see you. You're in for a treat! Beginning in September, we welcome a new leader to our congregation, Pastor Wanda Lawry. We are very happy to have her join our church family. We're going to put her in charge of a lot of stuff.

Sunday worship, 10:30 a.m., in person or on Zoom (meeting ID 768 992 383)

COVID-19

The science, the guidance, and the general approach to COVID-19 are all in a regular state of flux, and we at Oak Hill are fluxing accordingly. In general, our protocols are pretty simple: maintain physical distance, wear masks in the sanctuary, wash hands, limit contact with others, those sorts of things. For Communion, see *Communion* below.

Communion

Communion will be celebrated Sunday, September 4. Continuing with COVID-19 protocols, we offer small, individual cups of juice with a portion of communion bread in the lid. This is a safer option; if you are immunocompromised or just want to play it safe, use this. However, we are also offering retro Communion, which is essentially how we used to do it, except that we are taking steps to minimize our contact with anything you might be consuming that doesn't have a lid. There will be tiny cups of bread and separate tiny cups of juice (intinction is not returning anytime soon). And you are welcome to bring your own Communion materials from home, if you prefer (this would be the safest option). People might call this a hybrid Communion. People might also use terms such as "drill down" or "low-hanging fruit." We're not those people.

We also offer in-home Communion for our extended members. Please let us know if one of our extended members would like Communion in their home, and we can schedule a time. Please reach out to our pastor or someone on our committee.

WORSHIP AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE (cont'd)

Volunteering

If you feel like you would like to do more around here, well, this is a place where more can in fact be done. We have a regular need for liturgists, greeters and nursery caregivers. If your gifts are more of the musical variety, please let Minister of Music Susan Brown know. She would be happy to help get something set up so you can share your gifts with us. Also, to the youth in our church: We need acolytes! You get to wear a sash and play with fire. If you feel called to perform any of these, please let one of us know, or you can sign up on the website, oakhillpcusa.com (the “Worship” tab has an orange box that contains a Sign-up Genius link).



Rally Day and Blessing of the Backpacks

For those of you getting ready to return to school, feel free to bring your backpack with you to church on Sunday, September 11, when Blessing of the Backpacks will take place during worship. Then, once we're finished inside, we're shifting to outside for Rally Day (unless the weather is bad, then downstairs). We will serve hot dogs and brats. Prepackaged chips and drinks will be available. Games will likely be played. Prizes are often bestowed upon victors of such games.



Sunday School



Sunday School kicks off September 18. The curriculum this year will be *Feasting on the Word*, which, if you're a connoisseur of Sunday School curriculums, then I am glad to have shared this with you. The

children will meet in the Sunday School room, appropriately enough, which is located at the end of the ground floor hallway in the Education Annex. Just ask somebody – we'll be happy to show you. The

adults meet in the Large Assembly Room underneath the sanctuary.

Sunday School, 9:30 a.m. (no Zoom option for Sunday School this year)

Wednesday Bible Study

Wednesday Bible study will continue with *What my Grandmothers Taught Me*, by Merryl Blair. This book explores and seeks to understand the women mentioned in Matthew and how they might have helped mold the identity of Jesus.

Wednesday Bible Study, 11:00 on Wednesdays on Zoom (meeting ID 259 777 226; password Disciple)

EVANGELISM AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Our committee met on August 15th. We discussed member care concerns, reviewed our progress so far this year, and made plans in anticipation of Pastor Wanda's arrival soon.

We sponsored an Ice Cream Social on Sunday, July 10. It was a great turn out! Folks met outside the front of the church after service and enjoyed pre-packaged ice cream treats. The weather was warm but the treats were cool and tasty! It was so nice to see everyone and enjoy a time of fellowship together.



In anticipation of Pastor Wanda's arrival, we have updated member name tags. (Some name tags have also been made for our frequent visitors.) New tags are available and can be found in the back of the sanctuary in their usual location. Please help us get Pastor Wanda acquainted by wearing your tag during church events!

Upcoming plans for the remainder of the year are currently being organized. We are working on updating member rolls, the church directory, and planning some fun fall events including our annual Halloween festivities. Our next meeting will be held Monday September 12, at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

MISSION AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE

By Donna Cook

Exciting information from the Mission and Justice Committee

YOUR FALL SHOPPING LIST FOR I58

September 2022

4th - Deluxe mac & cheese - made without butter/milk, more accessible to people.

11th - Pancake Mix - Complete (just add water) pancake mix is simple and accessible.

18th - Beef Stew or Hearty Soup (the type you don't add water to)

25th - Your favorite snack crackers

October 2022

2nd - Sardines

9th - coffee, tea, or hot chocolate

16th - canned greens

23rd - cooking oil, 48 oz or smaller

30th - your favorite cookies

Don't forget Go-Bags are available for our unhoused neighbors.

WHAT? Back to School?

Yep. School has started but Isaiah 58 Ministries is already planning their event for 2023. We've volunteered to commit to **300- 2-pocket folders (no prongs, if possible)**. So, start bringing them in if you see them on sale. You can also catch them in bulk online.

Thank you, all kinds!

Thank you from the **Presbyterian Mission Agency** for our donation of \$2,524 for the One Great Hour of Sharing Fund. Thanks, too, for our donation of \$200 from the Mission and Justice Committee Budget to support of **Mission Co Worker Rev. Paula Cooper in East Central Africa**. (Pastor Paula is the former pastor at Curby Memorial Presbyterian Church, St. Louis.

We've also received a thank you from our friends at **Isaiah 58 Ministries** for a cash donation of \$152.48 and for the trunks full of food and supplies to support the ministry.

Thank you for all your support for the Mission & Justice projects and programs here at Oak Hill.

AMEN St. Louis (A Ministry Embracing the Neighborhood)

Eighty mission trippers converged on AMEN St. Louis for our 10th summer adventure. A great reopening after being closed for Covid for 2 summers. Groups spent Monday's doing behind the scenes work with **Lydia's House**, cooking up lunch for the **Heat Wave Shelter** or viewing a film from **PBS; Race the Power of Illusion: The House We Live In**. In the evening we hung out with our favorite Team Builder, **Clayton Delaney**, for games and fun in the park.

Tuesday, we headed off to **New Roots Urban Farm** and worked with Black Farmer **Antajuan Adams**, planting, weeding, sign painting (Black Farmers MatteR, Free Produce and more for other Black Farmers in the community). In the afternoon we participated in some discussions about Systemic Racism with **Rebecca Girresch** (also on Wednesday).

Wednesday was back at the Farm and more convo with Becky. Thursday, we prepared sandwiches with Dena Roper for **Tent Mission STL** to distribute on the streets and worked a shift at the **St. Louis Area Foodbank**. Friday, we assisted in the Fresh Food Distribution at **Isaiah 58 Ministries**, and one day we stuffed all the backpacks for the Back to School Fair. There was an occasional visit to the **Scott Joplin State Historic Site and the Griot Museum**. A special thanks to **Dena Roper** for all of her Hunger Action Organization with our food prep. Thanks to **Millie and Lucie Crittenden** for spending a huge portion of their summer vacation escorting our groups all over town from Jefferson Barracks to Bridgeton and joining in on the projects. Thanks, too, to **Victor Eckert** for helping to facilitate activities in the park. We have two groups who are carrying over to 2023 and two groups interested in booking for next year.

From June - August 8 we will have provided through our Mission Teams:

960 breakfast sandwiches

200+ peanut butter and jelly sandwiches

240 Heat Wave Haven Lunches

Approximately 300 cookies and 200 bags of trail mix and Chex Mix servings

Assorted desserts

MISSION AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE (cont'd)

By the end of August, we will provide an additional 80 lunches and 10 lunches for the Bounce Back Project via members of the congregation. Be sure to ask Dena about “gleaning potatoes” the Heat Wave Haven Shelter, Tent Mission, and The Bounce Back Project.

We’re on the waiting list for a table at **Tower Grove Pride Fest**, fingers crossed they’ll open more space, so watch for more information about volunteer opportunities.



REGISTERED AND READY TO VOTE—Midterm 2022 Election

Do you know the provisions of the new Missouri voting law that is in effect for the November election? Oak Hill is working with Metropolitan Congregations United (MCU) to be sure that members of our congregation, our social groups, our families, and our neighborhood are Registered and Ready to Vote. We need a group of people who are willing to reach out to others—friends or community members—and be sure they are ready and informed for the November 8, 2022, election. If you are interested, contact Paul Bordeaux, Heather Macarthur, or Lisa Thompson to get involved.

In case you are wondering, *are elections really something our church should be involved with?*

Here’s an answer found on the PC-USA website: “The Presbyterian church has encouraged community involvement and political activity on the part of its members.... For instance, in 1996, the General Assembly maintained: “There is a continuing need for those in the public arena to hear God’s voice through our political participation as citizen voters and advocates, and as politicians. As Christians this is in full accord with our belief that God is sovereign of all of life” (Minutes, 1996, Part I, p. 522). The most basic political activity is the responsibility to vote and to ensure that others are empowered for that same responsibility. To this end, we encourage churches to organize their local communities for voter registration and turnout.” From: **Lift Every Voice: Democracy, Voting Rights, and Electoral Reform**, (p.17), available for download at the following link: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/lift-every-voice-democracy-voting-rights-and-elect/>

STEWARDSHIP AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

By Brian Heuckroth

Our committee was able to get the leaks in the roof over the sanctuary repaired (caused by a storm), and the pothole in the alley behind the parking lot was fixed.

We also approved the use of the building for auditions by Take 2 Productions.

The following “jobs” are in the process of being completed:

- Modify temperature management in the sanctuary
- Water seal seams of AMEN house porch
- Remove weeds along parking lot fence
- Tuckpointing and flashing on walls between the church and the Educational Annex
- City to fix leaky water meter

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

By Deb Wiethop

Church Member Vienna Sowell is a recipient of a \$1,000 scholarship grant funded by the Oak Hill Scholarship Fund. She has received \$500 for the first semester and will receive \$500 for the second semester.

Vienna is pursuing a double major in apparel marketing and design, and entrepreneurship at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. Since childhood, her dream has been to be a fashion designer and open her own design house.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The following actions were reported or approved by Session in their August 10, 2022, Stated Session Meeting (Session did not have a Stated Meeting in July.):

Average Worship attendance in person and via Zoom in June was 43 and in July was 47.

Membership as of July 31, 2022, was 95.

Session voted to continue to follow the same guidelines for in-person worship. Basically, continued wearing of masks and social distancing. Communion will continue to be offered in the same, individual cups of juice with a portion of communion bread in the lid. However, individual cups of bread and small, individual cups juice will also be available.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS (cont'd)

Session approved taking \$1,000 from the Scholarship Fund for a scholarship grant awarded Vienna (Sophie) Sowell.

Session voted to approve taking funds from the Peace and Global Witness Offering to help pay for the Air Quality Control Monitor that we agreed to mount on the AMEN House in partnership with MCU and a group of researchers from Washington University. The cost should be under \$300.

The following information was provided to Session following the May 11, 2022, Stated Session Meeting:

Financial Reports for June and Year-to-Date 2022

	June	2022 YTD Total
Income		
Actual	\$21,808.42	\$102,052.24
Budgeted	\$27,330.00	\$87,750.00
Over (Under) Budget	(\$5,521.58)	\$14,302.24
Expenses		
Actual	\$11,406.39	\$76,635.70
Budgeted	\$19,950.64	\$99,977.31
Over/(Under) Budget	(\$8,544.25)	(\$23,341.61)
Net Revenue/(Loss)	\$10,402.03	\$25,416.54

Financial Reports for July and Year-to-Date 2022

	July	2022 YTD Total
Income		
Actual	\$11,043.91	\$113,096.15
Budgeted	\$18,080.00	\$105,830.00
Over (Under) Budget	(\$7,036.09)	\$7,266.15
Expenses		
Actual	\$10,731.37	\$87,367.07
Budgeted	\$19,924.64	\$119,901.95
Over/(Under) Budget	(\$9,193.27)	(\$32,534.88)
Net Revenue/(Loss)	\$312.54	\$25,729.08

BOOK CLUBS

Oak Hill Book Club

The Book Club will meet at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 13, at the Barrow residence. We will discuss *The Rose Code* by Kate Quinn, a World War II thriller set at Bletchley Park in England. Please bring your dinner and join us. The discussion will start at 7 p.m. on Zoom: 259 777 226 Password: Disciple (case sensitive).



Wednesday Touchy Topics Book Club

The Touchy Topics book club meets Wednesday, September 7, to discuss *Becoming Brave: Finding the Courage to Pursue Racial Justice*, by Dr. Brenda Salter McNeil. Following the biblical narrative of Esther, McNeil challenges Christians to break the silence and work for justice. For October, the group is reading *Nice White Ladies*, by Jessie Daniels, which explores the role of White women in the endurance of systemic racism. Touchy Topics Book Club, Wednesday, September 7, at 7:00 on Zoom (contact the church via Facebook for the link)

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Circle 3 will meet on the third Thursday of September - September 15, in the Theleos Room at 10 a.m. Bring a sandwich -- chips, dessert, iced tea and coffee will be provided.

Hat Not Hate Update

We completed and sent in 43 blue hats to Hat Not Hate an anti-bullying program. Their goal was 5,000 hats by August 1. They announced in mid-August that they received 15,565 hats! We are going to work on hats for next year! If you want to help out, you can make a hat or buy some yarn and always pray for the kids who are being bullied. Thanks for everyone's help! The director of the organization ends all of her videos with the following reminder: "Always, always, ALWAYS be kind."

CRAFT CLUB

Join us on Zoom for our monthly Craft Night on Friday, September 16, at 7:00 p.m. It's a great time to share your projects and work on more. Snack and hangout! Let Dena Roper know if you have any questions.

PREBYTERY OF GIDDINGS-LOVEJOY

A visit to the Churchill Museum in Fulton, MO., will be the focus of the Presbytery History Team tour on Wednesday, October 12. The museum is located at Westminster College, the scene of Winston Churchill's historic Iron Curtain speech. The tour group will also attend an organ concert at the Church of St. Mary Aldermandbury on the campus. The tour bus will leave from Faith Des Peres Presbyterian Church, 11155 Clayton Road, Frontenac, MO (just west of Lindbergh.) Cost is \$79 and includes price of admission, lunch, and transportation. (No refunds after October 1st.) Reservations required - Contact Jan Stanford for reservations. Make checks payable to Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy. Note History Tour in memo line.

**LECTIONARY FOR SEPTEMBER**

Sunday, September 4	Jer. 18:1-11 and <i>Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18</i> ; Phlm. 1:1-21; Luke 14:25-33
Sunday, September 11	Jer. 4:11-12, 22-28 and <i>Psalm 14</i> ; 1 Tim. 1:12-17; Luke 15:1-10
Sunday, September 18	Jer. 8:18-9;1 and <i>Psalm 79:1-9</i> ; 1 Tim. 2:1-7; Luke 16:1-13
Sunday, September 25	Jer. 32:1-3a, 6-15 and <i>Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16</i> ; 1 Tim. 6:6-19; Luke 16:19-31

Oak Hill Presbyterian Church
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www.oakhillpcusa.org

office@oakhillpcusa.org

We are a welcoming congregation where visitors are always expected!

Christian Education - 9:30 a.m.
(Beginning September 18, 2022 – In Person)

Service of Worship
(In Person and on Zoom)
10:30 a.m.

The ministers of Oak Hill Church are its members assisted by:

Rev. Wanda Lawry
Interim Pastor

Rev. Dr. Alan Meyers
“Amicus Ecclesiae”
(Friend of the Church)

Ms. Susan Brown
Minister of Music

Ms. Carole Adams
Secretary

Articles for publication
in the
Oak Hill News
need to be
submitted in writing
to the church office by the
3rd Monday of each month.